HATEYMALO

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

ICRC

IN BRIEF

ICRC

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Front Cover:

"If we stay at home, we feel bad and it's nice to come together: we can share our problems with one another in the meeting. We are getting a chance to learn more things about the programme and ourselves. We feel lighter in the meeting."

HATEYMALO PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

More than 1,380 people remain unaccounted for since the end of the armed conflict (1996 -2006). Their families do not know whether they are dead or alive, and live with the anguish of uncertainty. Most of these families say that their primary need is to obtain answers and proof of what happened to their relatives so that they can move on with their lives.

The ICRC launched the *Hateymalo* program in 2010 to help the families of missing persons (FoM) cope with the ambiguity of their loss through the provision of psychological, socio-cultural, economic, and legal/ administrative support. With support groups as the core of its multi-faceted interventions, the program helps them discover new connections to move ahead in life, and aims to restore the functionality of the families at the individual, community and family level.

The program also includes building solidarity networks of other service providers locally

and nationally. It mobilizes them to include the families of missing persons in their assistance, primarily for economical, legal/administrative and mental health support.

Currently, the *Hateymalo* program is operational in 16 districts for 648 families for 2 years in partnership with Nepali community based non-governmental organizations. (See the districts in Map.)

HATEYMALO PROGRAM
QUICK FACTS

Pilot phase (2010 Aug—2012 June)

- total 266 families
- scattered in 28 VDCs (sub-districts)
- 1 implementing partner NGO
- 15 accompaniers
- 2 supervisors

1st expansion (2011 March-2013 June)

- total 262 families
- scattered in 110 VDCs (sub-districts)
- 5 implementing partner NGOs
- 32 accompaniers
- 10 supervisors

2nd expansion (2011 Nov—2013 Dec)

- total 120 families
- scattered in 50 VDCs (sub-districts)
- 2 implementing partner NGOs
- 12 accompaniers
- 4 supervisors

PSYCHOSOCIAL CHALLENGES

Psychological challenges due to ambiguous loss are not a psychiatric problem, but rather a relational and social challenge. Various studies in Nepal have shown that owing to the effects of ambiguous loss caused due to the disappearance of loved ones in conflict, the families face complex socio-cultural and relational challenges that affect their daily lives.

Ninety percent of the total active missing cases in the country are male, and in the Nepali context with the son missing, the elderly parents lose their financial and social support. Furthermore, when families do not know whether their missing relatives are dead or alive they have difficulty performing death rituals for them. The inability to perform these rituals, which are supposed to open the passage to the after life, distress families as they believe that the soul of the missing person is trapped in this world.

Without their husband, wives lose their role in the family and are seen as an extra mouth

Note: *For ICRC Intervention purpose, the challenges facing the families of missing persons have been broken down into: Social/Community support needs, family support needs, spiritual and cultural needs, emotional and psychological needs, economic needs, administrative and legal needs and mental health needs as illustrated in the Hateymalo framework.*

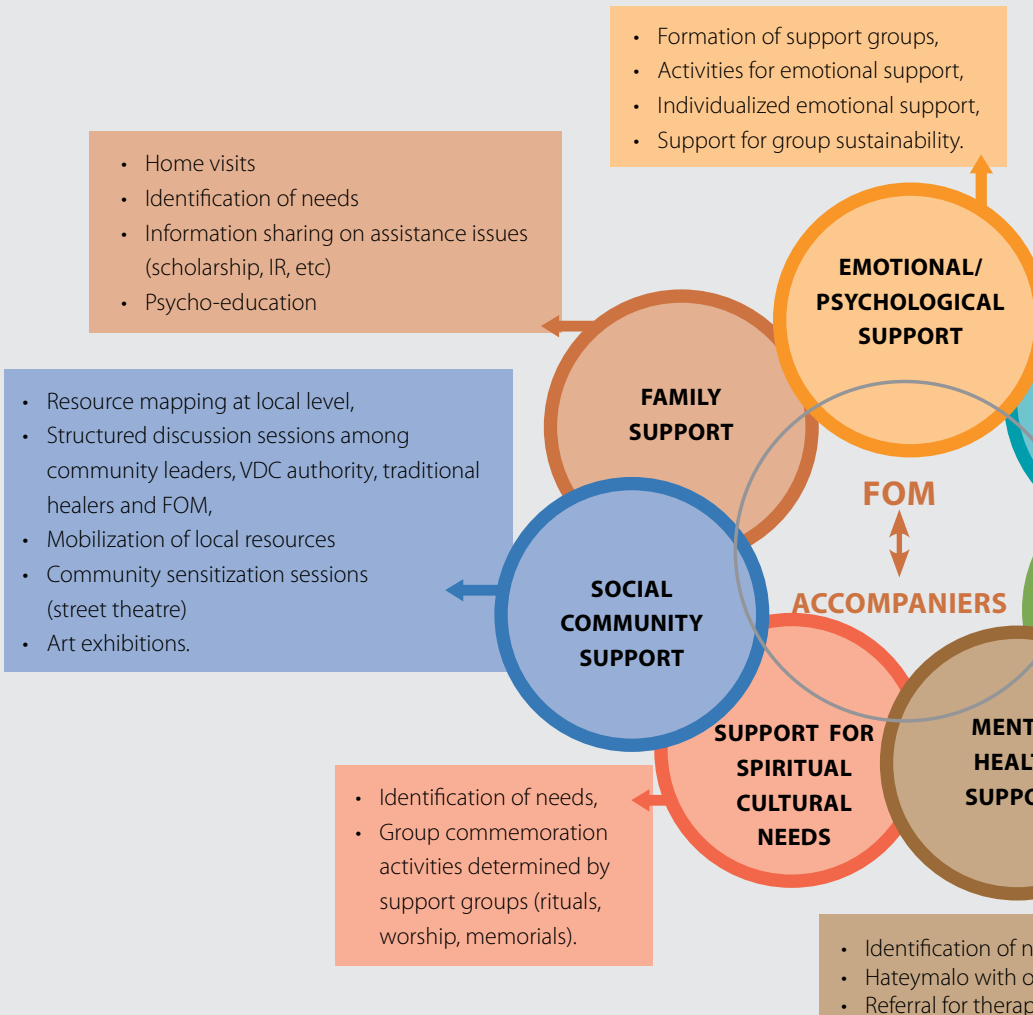
WHAT IS AMBIGUOUS LOSS?

It is a loss that has no verification, thus is unclear and without closure. Such a loss can lead to depression, anxiety, medically unexplained physical pains, and violence and may even result in suicide.

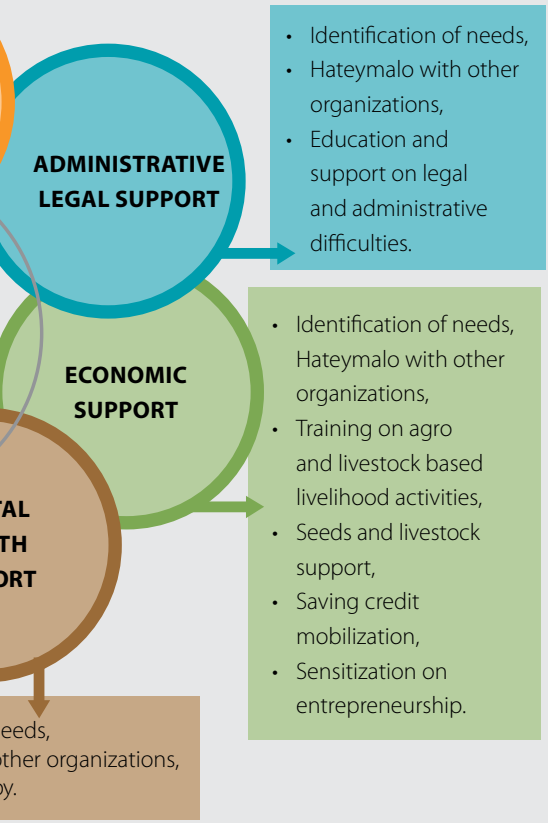
to feed. Additionally they face stigmatization from the community for not following the dress codes and behaviors of widows. Due to the lack of legal status for the Missing, wives cannot claim their husband's property. In most communities, it is not culturally and economically acceptable for the wives to go back to their parents.

The psychological distress that they face due to the ambiguous loss is compounded by these economic, socio-cultural, legal, and familial challenges.

ICRC HATEYMALO PROGRAM FRAME



EWORK



WHAT IS PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT ?

Psychosocial support is about helping survivors of disasters or crisis to resume their regular lives. This support emphasizes on the connection between the psychological needs following our experiences (our thoughts, emotions and behavior) and our wider social experience (our relationships, inter-actions with others, social integration within a community, tradition and culture).

HATEYMALO PROGRAM INTERVENTIONS

a. Social/Community support: In order to reduce the stigma and marginalization that FoM faced, activities are conducted to raise community awareness. These activities take three shapes in order to address the different segment of the population. Street theatres are organized in VDCs depicting the plight of the FoM in order to educate the population at large. Interaction programs with key stakeholders and service providers at the VDC level are conducted to garner support from these key figures. A district level orientation program is also conducted for the same purpose addressing district level resource organization forming a loose solidarity network of resource organizations to support some of the multi-faceted needs of the FoM. Additionally, art events depicting the current life of FoM are conducted and exhibited for a larger audience.

b. Family support: Information regarding governmental interim relief packages is disseminated at the family level. This dissemination targets the family as a unit, and all voices and concerns can be heard. This also functions as an additional avenue to understand individualized family needs for further referral to other services. For family disputes, referrals are made to organizations specializing in mediation, or to village leaders for mediation.

c. Support for spiritual and cultural needs: FOM generally express a desire for commemorating their loved one during the support group sessions. Groups themselves decide what is meaningful for them, for the missing person and for the recognition from their communities. Based on group consensus, commemoration activities are facilitated. Generally two distinct routes have been taken by the families: i) religious events/ rituals where it is believed that the soul of the missing person, whether dead or alive would get peace, and ii) building of public spaces like waiting areas, water well, and tree plantation in the name of the missing person. In both of these routes taken, communities participate to provide recognition to the missing persons and the families.

d. Emotional and psychological support: ICRC trained accompaniers provide emotional/psychological support through theme centred support groups. These group sessions are structured discussions with a therapeutic intent of finding peer support, finding meaning and thus being able to cope with the psychological pain of ambiguous loss. Wives and mothers who show more signs of distress in the groups, or are unable to attend groups, receive individual emotional support and client centred problem solving counselling.

e. Economic support: Most of the FoM in rural areas are subsistent farmers. In order to facilitate for their economical support, ICRC partners with Heifer International for economic support through animal husbandry and agronomy. Training on animal management, fodder management, and kitchen gardening is provided to the existing support groups, followed by the provision of livestock (goats and pigs), and seeds for vegetable gardening. Based on the Heifer principal of "passing on the gift", all the members of the groups are asked to choose another vulnerable family in their community, and handover the "gift" of the livestock after their animals gave off-springs. These new vulnerable families form a "sister groups" which, by joining with the original mothers' and wives' groups functions as a larger self-help group. Additionally, families who are in need and are committed for income generation skills training, are referred through ICRC initiative to Helvetas Employment Fund, government run Skills For Employment Program, and skills training conducted by Local Peace Committee.

WHAT IS A SOLIDARITY NETWORK AND WHY?

The difficulties facing the families of missing persons are complex and multifaceted, ranging over socio-cultural, economic, legal and mental issues. A single organization, however resourceful it may be, cannot provide support in all these areas. Channelling resources from multiple service providers is the only solution for this. Hence, Hateymalo program has built a loose solidarity network of other service providers, operating locally and nationally, to garner support for the families.

The solidarity network for referrals consists of Heifer International, Helvetas Employment Fund, CTEVT – Skills for Employment Project, Advocacy Forum-Nepal, Center for Mental Health and Counselling (CMC), Women Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC), Mental Hospital, Lagankhel, Kathmandu and Sahakarmi Samaj, Banke. Hateymalo program mobilizes this network to include the families of missing persons in their assistance programs, primarily for economical, legal/administrative and mental health support.

f. Administrative and legal support: Through the loose solidarity network, legal aid organizations like the Bar Association, and Advocacy Forum provide free legal and administrative support for FoM who are facing challenges in receiving the interim relief, receiving scholarship for their children, and in acquiring administrative documents like birth certificates, marriage certificates etc. Accompaniers refer families who need this kind of support to the above-mentioned organizations and follow up to ensure the families receive the services.

g. Mental health support: Provision is made for people suffering from suicidal ideation, severe depression, anxiety or psychosis to receive specialized mental health care.v

ICRC HATEYMALO PROGRAM PARTNER NGOS

Bardiya
Tharu Mahila Utthan Kendra, Gulariya
Tel: 084-420347/420350

Dang
Gramin Mahila Utthan Kendra, Ghorahi
Tel: 082-560489, 560837

Chitwan/Nawalparasi
Diyalo Pariwar. Narayangadh
Tel: 056-522797/523031

Banke
Mahila Upakar Munch, Kohalpur
Tel: 081-540144

Rupandehi/Kapilvastu
Namuna Intregated Development Council,
Ghorahi, Tel: 071-527205, 522905

Kathmandu Valley
Antarang, Jyatha, Kathmandu
Tel: 01- 4221173

Jhapa/Morang/Sunsari
Women Rehabilitation Center(WOREC),
Biratnagar, Tel: 021-530666

Kaski/Tanahu/Lamjung
Kopila Nepal, Pokhara
Tel: 061 466403/463486

MISSION

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance.

The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.

Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.

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